

# EXHIBIT O

Sections

**SKIP TO CONTENTS****SKIP TO SITE INDEX**

**SUBSCRIBE FOR \$2/WEEK**Log in

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

•

ADVERTISEMENT

Continue reading the main story

Back to Sway

--1:0-6

---

TRANSCRIPT

# If You Were on Parler, You Saw the Mob Coming

Hosted by Kara Swisher

**It is a go-to social media site for the right, with users calling to “burn D.C. to the ground.” The C.E.O., John Matze, says it’s not his job to police speech.**

Thursday, January 7th, 2021

---

[MUSIC PLAYING] (SINGING) When you walk in the room, do you have sway?

kara swisher

This is Sway. I’m Kara Swisher and I’m recording on Wednesday evening in the middle of a coup attempt in our nation’s Capitol. As of right now, Washington is on lockdown with senators and members of the House sheltering in place after a mob incited by President Trump stormed Congress. The attack shocked the nation. But if you’re a far-right Trump supporter, if you think the election was stolen, then you may have been planning for this day. And you may have been planning for it on social media.

---

Three decades ago and 30 miles away, I started covering the nascent internet. I was at the headquarters of a company interviewing a group of quilters who had met online and made a quilt together without ever meeting in person. It was sweet and hopeful, which is how it was back then in tech. The company was America Online. Well, America is online now, and it's been a downward slide into what can only be called a toxic swamp of hate, conspiracy theories, and anger, all presided over by the troll-in-chief, Donald Trump. Today he egged on the crowd of his MAGA fans to march over to the Capitol, and Trump continued to add fuel to the fire via Twitter, just as his successor Joe Biden was in the process of being certified as president. I wish I could say I was surprised. On my other podcast yesterday, I said that I expected violence at the Capitol after I spent time on a variety of social media sites where you could see it coming.

In my first column for The New York Times, I wrote about all these tech field communications tools and their dangers. I said, quote, "[They] have become the digital arms dealers of the modern age... They have mutated human communication, so that connecting people has too often become about pitting them against one another, and turbocharged that discord into an unprecedented and damaging volume. They have weaponized social media. They have weaponized the First Amendment. They have weaponized civil discourse. And they have weaponized, most of all, politics."

When I wrote that column in 2018, a new social media site was just launching. It was called Parler. Now it's called Parler. Parler has since become the darling of the far right. Ted Cruz is active on it. He says Parler quote, "gets what free speech is all about." The site is nowhere near as big or powerful as Twitter or Facebook, but it's a platform of choice for some people who, frankly, scare me. Parler's C.E.O is a guy named John Matze. I've been wanting to have him on the show. And as I watched the insurrection unfold on TV, I thought now's the time. We spoke for a while about the dangerous power he's unleashing. By the way, minutes after we hung up, Twitter locked Trump's feed temporarily and threatened to take more drastic action if he continued to violate its rules. That's something Matze suggested Parler would not do. Here's our conversation about that and more.

---

So there is an effective coup attempt happening in our nation's Capitol to stop a vote that was occurring there. It moved all the legislators out of the Capitol. Are you surprised at all by what's happening?

john matze

Well, I don't know what I would describe it as. I guess I'm kind of surprised, because it's surreal, if that makes sense.

kara swisher

Sure is.

john matze

But I'm also not surprised, because if you put yourself in the shoes of a lot of these people, they feel like an election was stolen once. And then they feel like an election was stolen again yesterday. And so they are left thinking, well, what am I supposed to do? So they hear this rhetoric. They don't believe, they don't trust the results. They feel like they've been fed a lot of propaganda. They feel like they can't trust the media.

kara swisher

Well, they certainly have. But go ahead.

john matze

Well, I believe that almost everybody is. But you have to be able to judge that for yourself and make your own decisions, weigh the pros and cons. But that being said, a lot of these people feel like they can't trust anything, but they do genuinely believe that the election was stolen. So if you put yourself in their shoes, I'm not exactly surprised they're doing this.

kara swisher

---

All right, John, if you feel like you're in a restaurant, you don't get good service, do you feel like you can break the windows and invade people's homes? I'm just curious that this just doesn't seem to be —

john matze

No, I go home.

kara swisher

Yes, exactly.

john matze

In fact, I don't even like going to restaurants. I like staying home.

kara swisher

OK, but let me ask you a question. This is not this — first of all, feelings aren't facts. And I want to know if you were watching it on Parler, which is a site you run, which you are the C.E.O of. Have you been seeing this organizational stuff?

john matze

Well, you know I don't necessarily monitor a lot of this stuff. I participate and watch Parler just as anybody else does. If people are breaking the law, violating our terms of service, or doing anything illegal, we would definitely get involved. But if people are just trying to assemble or they're trying to put together an event — which is what a lot of people tried to do at this event today — there's nothing particularly wrong about that. Now I had noticed a long time ago that there were some accounts trying to get people off to private telegram groups and things of that nature, where Parler couldn't witness what's going on or it wouldn't be public. But, you know, for the most part, I haven't seen a whole lot of illegal activity. And if it was, it would have been taken down. We've had multiple doxxing attempts that have resulted in some of the people organizing these movements have actually had their accounts taken down due to doxxing. But organizing an event isn't illegal.

---

kara swisher

Understandably, and organizing a peaceful protest is also perfectly fine. A lot of the stuff I saw Parler was actually organizing bringing guns into the district — which is illegal, as you know, carrying guns — organizing exactly what's happened on the Capitol. How did you deal with that?

john matze

Well, the way we work on our platform is we put everything to a community jury. So everyone's judged by a jury of their peers in determining whether the action is illegal or against our rules. And so if reported, it goes to a jury of people's peers. And if it's deemed illegal, promptly deleted. But, you know, the jury of five people get to decide. And it's a random jury, so they don't know each other. They don't know what they're voting. They just get the independent facts of the situation and they make their own judgment call. We've actually been inviting journalists and other people to join the jury as well, so that we have a nice transparent jury system.

kara swisher

All right, but what I'm asking specifically, there were specific postings and quite a few of them — and we have dozens of them to look at — which is talking about doing just what they did today on the Capitol. Were these adjudicated, if that's the right word? And if they pass muster, is that a particularly good jury, if these are illegal activities what's happening right now in the Capitol?

john matze

Well, for violence, and advocacy of violence, or violence specifically, it needs to be a clear and imminent threat. And I don't know — I've been witnessing what happened today a little bit, but I'm not really too much in the weeds on this stuff. I haven't seen a whole lot of illegal activity. Maybe there has been some, but it's a minority of the cases.

kara swisher

---

Well, I do believe having been to the Capitol dozens of times that if you do anything that not go through their metal detectors, you don't follow the rules, you break windows, you run through the other people's offices, you take pictures of their offices, you sit-in their seats, I believe that's all illegal.

john matze

Yes, but I do want to push back a little bit on this here. Because if you go back six months ago, you had a lot of the media putting out full stop — including The New York Times — saying in defense of looting where they came out and said it's acceptable to loot. And looting and all this stuff needs to be — there's even a book written and promoted. But it was during the time when there was a lot of people on the left looting and angry.

kara swisher

The New York Times does not promote — I'm going to push back on you. The New York Times was absolutely not promoting looting. That is untrue.

john matze

Well, my —

kara swisher

You can say it. This is — you can say it. It's untrue. It's 100% true. It's not true.

john matze

Well, I don't know the specifics of the —

kara swisher

No, don't do the I don't know the specifics. You don't know the specifics. I'm telling you it's untrue. And unless you have a specific, you can't make that allegation. I'm talking about the activities today. And I do want to understand what was happening on your platform. And again, it was happening on Twitter and other places. But do you feel any responsibility if people were organizing to

— protests are very different. And you're absolutely right. Everyone gets to run around with whatever flag they want to fly, and whatever coat they want to wear, and whatever chant they want to have. But going into the Capitol building to do this, if it was organized on your site, what should happen on your site?

john matze

Look, if it was illegally organized and against the law and what they were doing, they would have gotten it taken down. But I don't feel responsible for any of this and neither should the platform, considering we're a neutral town square that just adheres to the law. So if people are organizing something, that's more of a problem of people are upset. They feel disenfranchised. They need their leaders to stop provoking this partisan hate. They need to come together and have a discussion on a place like Parler.

kara swisher

So I want to finish this with specifically there were a lot of examples of people calling for what they did today. Do you believe what happened within the Capitol today, if you were the judge and jury as you do on Parler, would this be the thing you would think is legal? Not that they feel bad and I think I'll break something. Do you think this was legal what happened to the people that moved into the Capitol and trespassed?

john matze

I mean, it's obviously illegal. What their actions that they took, yes.

kara swisher

And if they were organizing on your platform, do you think it should have been taken down on Parler? It sounds like you do not think that.

john matze

If they were organizing specifically saying, tomorrow, we're going to go out and we're going to bust this window. Hey, by the way, guys, there's an area we can



climb up in and break into that window. If that is what they were doing, yeah, of course, that would get taken down. But that's not what people were doing. They were saying let's peacefully protest for the President. That's what a lot of people were saying, not just on Parler, on Twitter, on Facebook, on every major social network. And including ones that we will have no ability to police. Now you have to take into consideration that everything on Parler, Twitter, Facebook, all of these places are very public. But what happens when people use direct messaging apps that are two-way encrypted that even the service providers don't know what these groups are talking about? How do you address those situations? And you can't do it using authoritarian measures. You must do it using the media, the politicians, the leaders. They have to come out and have a discussion with the people and show that they care, that they want to discuss these things. And that is why I think Parler provides those platforms to do that. Because people can come out and transparently say what they believe and they can be transparently addressed by those in charge. However, there is a large movement of people who want to push for authoritarian measures and censorship. And it just puts gas right on the fire. And we need people to come out and set examples.

kara swisher

So your point that they get driven underground if they don't have a wide open space, public space to do this in?

john matze

Yeah, I think so. Do you disagree?

kara swisher

Sometimes. Sometimes not. It depends. I think if people are actually calling for civil war on your platform or pushing egregious lies that lead to violence, down it goes. It's very — and I think you should be responsible for it, not some jury. I think you have some responsibility for what's happened on your platform.

john matze

---

Well, how would you do it then? Would you put together an authoritarian task force or?

kara swisher

I think it's super — well, if you want to use the word authoritarian, everybody has rules. Restaurants have rules. Retail places have rules. Everywhere you go in life has different rules that you adhere to or you don't. Or you don't do it and then you suffer the consequences.

john matze

I think that you have a few options. One is you can be proactively monitoring, and spying on people, and surveilling them, which is what some platforms have decided to do to some extent. Although, most surveillance is limited into capturing data about people in order to sell products and manipulate them. But nobody has yet really done the surveillance thing, as far as I'm aware, in order to stifle speech. They have gotten into it a little bit. But it's a difficult question. You have 12 million, 13 million people on Parler, for example, and you can't watch what all of them are doing. And I don't think it's our obligation to. Society needs to work together in a democracy to get through things like this.

kara swisher

Let's talk about — so how do you want to monitor your site? Not at all? Let people say civil war? Let people say — you think that's great, you think that's — not great — what do you think when people are saying it's time for civil war, I'm bringing my guns to Washington? You think you just let them say that?

john matze

Well, if it was up to me we wouldn't be in this situation where two sides hate each other this much.

kara swisher

I get it, but here we find ourselves.

---

john matze

Whether or not it's Parler, it's Twitter, it's Facebook, it's Google, it's telegram, WhatsApp, whatever it might be, you can't stop people and change their opinions by force by censoring them. They'll just go somewhere else and do it. So as long as it is legal, it's allowed.

kara swisher

We'll be back in a minute.

So when did you become aware of the events at the Capitol?

john matze

I saw it early around, I guess, my time would be 10, 11 AM my time. So a few hours ago. I was alerted when — because I was on conference calls all morning. And so by the time I found out about this, it was due to a traffic spike. And I was like, what do you mean traffic spike? It's a random Wednesday. What are you talking about?

kara swisher

But you had a server outage earlier today. What happened? Was it because of the slam of people trying to use it or what?

john matze

Well, we're in the middle of an upgrade. So it's not an ideal time. We're trying to optimize a few things. And so then you get an influx of millions of people, 3 million people by two o'clock Eastern today.

kara swisher

Then what were they doing? What were they doing? Were they talking about going into the Capitol or were they talking about protesting?

john matze

---

No, most people were watching it. Most people were trying to understand what was happening. They were like, where are the videos? What's going on? What are people doing? It's interesting, the reaction is half of the people were actually — that I was following, so I follow a diverse set of people. I follow some very hardcore progressives, some conservatives, and a lot of libertarians, and some people were apolitical. A lot of the reactions that I saw at first had been condoning what's going on. And then some people paranoid saying, oh, this isn't really Trump supporters. It's a bunch of — this is organized by some conspiracy theories, which I think are completely ludicrous, because —

kara swisher

That was Trump supporters.

john matze

I think people have been stoking themselves up for something like this.

kara swisher

So when you think about these conspiracy theories, you think you should just let them fly, and let this autonomous jury, or let the discussion just have out?

john matze

It's not against the law to have a conspiracy theory. But if they have a conspiracy theory, people should call them out for it. And people should build their own reputations as being a reliable source, rather than us trying to become the reliable source. And so that's a huge differentiator between Parler and Twitter and Facebook is they want to be the authoritative reliable source of information.

kara swisher

, Well let's work through your guidelines then. What are your community guidelines exactly?

john matze

---

Well, we have a few major rules. But let's go over the most violated or the most kind of touched upon.

kara swisher

Yes, all right. Let's talk about that.

john matze

The one that we have absolutely no tolerance for under any circumstances is doxxing personal information like home addresses, phone numbers, unless is like a call your Congressman kind of thing. You can put their phone number there or send them a letter to their P.O. box.

kara swisher

So no home addresses. Also a problem on all the other platforms too.

john matze

Yes, but that, we don't even warn people. That just gets taken down immediately, because that's an imminent threat. Like you can't — what are you doing? You're posting someone's home address, so what? You can mail them cookies? No, they want to hurt them.

kara swisher

So, that's one, doxxing or personal information.

john matze

Yes, and then illegal activity, of course, will get taken down, as long as it's illegal. And so the difference is if someone says something mean or violent, it's not necessarily illegal. It has to cross that threshold.

kara swisher

---

You said a majority of the activity today was observational, but not all of it. Can you acknowledge that people today do use Parler to go organize and plan to go to the Capitol?

john matze

I don't think it's really good for planning events, to be honest. The way the format's set up, it's more for announcements like, hey, we have an event. The planning was mostly done on things like Facebook groups, or like a telegram, or a WhatsApp would probably be better for planning.

kara swisher

But are they using it to plan? Do you think they use it for organization?

john matze

I'm sure some people do.

kara swisher

OK. Can you acknowledge that people in the Capitol right now are, in fact, violating the law? They're carrying guns, breaking windows. Are they threatening law and order from your perspective?

john matze

I'm sure some are.

kara swisher

OK.

john matze

I haven't actually seen any videos of anybody protesting that had guns. I saw a protester that got shot. But I didn't actually see the protesters doing any shooting. I haven't seen any videos like that yet.

kara swisher

---

Yeah, a woman has now died.

john matze

Yes, she was a protester I believe, though. She was shot by the — I think it was the — I don't know who she was shot by, though. I didn't actually see that.

kara swisher

How long does it take between a message threatening violence and sedition, for example, or anything else, how long does it take to flag to you as a C.E.O that gets to you? Do these things get to you? Because they do get to Jack Dorsey, a lot of the more problematic ones.

john matze

Sometimes they do. It just depends on how nasty, how violent, and whether or not the authorities were needed to get involved. And it just depends on a lot of factors and how many people it reached. If you come out and you say something incredibly nasty and violent, but you get no votes and no impressions, the likelihood of being on the platform longer is higher, because we aren't surveilling people or figuring it on our own.

kara swisher

But you don't have any algorithmic catching of words and things like that? Like I'm going to kill blank kind of thing.

john matze

No, the only algorithm that we have for catching words is for pornography and nudity and things like that.

kara swisher

But it takes 48 hours, because of the fully automated jury process. Is that correct?

john matze

---

It can. It depends on how inundated the jury is and how many jurors are active. Most days, it takes less than five minutes. But some days, like today, it'll probably take 24 hours.

kara swisher

That's a long time on the internet, long enough for violence. Does that policy work? Do you see it scaling as you get larger?

john matze

It has scaled well so far. It's scaled a lot better than trying to hire out teams. Because if you imagine, if we have to hire people, they've got to go through a period of interviews, and background checks, and building up a whole team. And Facebook, I don't know how many people they have. But I do know that I've heard numbers as high as 20,000 people doing the moderation. And so scaling out teams like that, it's very time-consuming, and difficult, and expensive.

kara swisher

Well, yes, but you could anticipate you might need them. These self-appointed juries, they're judging millions of people?

john matze

Yes, I don't know how many people at this point are part of the jury. I have asked to grow the jury over 2000 people. I don't know how far along we are getting it to that size, but it's pretty substantial.

kara swisher

Do you know how many flags today? Do you have any idea of how many flags today?

john matze

I'd have to ask the database engineer.

kara swisher



---

They spend a lot of time picking juries, so they are somewhat neutral. Although, it's almost impossible to do it. How do you do that if most of the people on your site are of the same political bent, which is more conservative?

john matze

Well, we have a lot of jury training, and jurors are picked by their tenure. and there's very specific things that they — buttons they have to select to categorize the violation. That being said, we also have internal metrics. So if somebody is marking more things or less things as a violation compared to the norm or they're outliers, then they get kicked from the jury pool.

kara swisher

So what would be illegal? So saying, let's raid the Capital would not be illegal just because they're saying it?

john matze

Well, it's hard to get into the specifics. But I can give you an example. I guess, if you said I know where you live. I'm going to come to your house and I'm going to hurt you. That's a clear and imminent threat, because you clearly know where that person lives. You're going to their house. You're going to hurt them. So that is an example. But I don't generally like to get into specifics, because it can get really touchy.

kara swisher

Right, but community guidelines around harmful and violent speech, that you would consider harmful and violent speech?

john matze

Yes. Yeah, anything that presents a clear and imminent threat, that would be violent.

kara swisher

---

And how do you compare it to what's happening — I'm going to use Twitter as the example, because I think a lot of people don't focus on you as a Facebook killer, more as a Twitter rival, essentially. How do you consider what they're doing with the labeling of President Trump?

john matze

I think it's inappropriate. I do. And I think it undermines a lot of what they're trying to do. And so you have to put yourself in the shoes of the people who are following President Trump. And so if you put yourself in their shoes — which, by the way, I am not a conservative, and I'm not a Trump voter. In fact, I didn't even vote in the last election. I just didn't want to bring myself to doing it. But I just I can't do it. I didn't want to participate in all of this.

kara swisher

Because?

john matze

Well, one, I think I actually am pretty neutral on a lot of this stuff. And two, it just feels like a mess. I don't really want to participate in this mess.

kara swisher

In a mess?

john matze

Yeah.

kara swisher

Gosh, it feels like a privilege to me.

john matze

Well, I don't know. This whole year has been a mess. A lot of people fighting. One side fighting each other. And it's like I'll call out the people on either side.

And frankly, I think — I don't know that it's my place to weigh in. And so that by being neutral and actually kind of living a little bit more neutral, I think it's —

kara swisher

All right, let me make something a little easier. What happened to Alex Jones on the platforms? He was he was active for a long time until Apple moved and then the rest of them moved rather quickly afterwards. How do you how do you look at someone like an Alex Jones and what happened with Twitter, Apple, Facebook, and others?

john matze

Well, I think it's a little bit wrong that — not just a little bit, it's extremely wrong that everybody just purged him all at the same time. If he says something crazy — I mean, he says a lot of crazy stuff all the time — that's a great time to reinforce for somebody who's trusted with the mainstream and elsewhere to reinforce hey, this guy is crazy. These ideas are crazy. Look at what he just said. That's a great opportunity. But purging him — the people who follow him, A, they want more. They get more devout in my opinion. And furthermore, it's wrong. It's like a collective digital kind of purging of him, and his existence, and his ideas. It's really — it's authoritarian and it's wrong that everybody, once one person bans them, everybody bans them. It's horrible. It sets a horrible precedence.

kara swisher

So you would have left him up? You're not of the school that thinks that as he gets to say more, he converts more people, the lies he tells get worse, and that more people start to believe his conspiracy theories?

john matze

Well, why should I weigh in as an authoritative source, as an authority figure? What if I, as a person, was against a certain group whether race, religion, or whatever it was, and we aimed our platform — and not just me let's say, Mark Zuckerberg, let's say Jack Dorsey, any of the other tech companies. What if any of

us said, we don't like this particular religion, or race, or group, and then targeted them and took them off the internet? How horrible would that be?

kara swisher

So tell me, when you talk about people taking things down off of things like Facebook, or Twitter labeling things, a lot of people say that's a free speech violation. In fact, they are private companies and they can do whatever they want. Do you think it's OK that they do that? Do you think they should be allowed to do that given these are private companies and not public squares?

john matze

Well, it's a little bit of a sticky situation, because you can't violate the company's right to free speech. They don't have to do business with everybody. You can't force somebody to work for somebody else. But at the same time, we are in a country that likes free speech. So you are limited on what you can say online. A lot of people go there thinking that it's an open place, a town forum. They think that they're private, or at least, that their information is not being stored and sold and all of this. But they're also wrong. And so what we wanted to do is be a community town square for free speech. As long as it's legal, they can go ahead and talk about it online. And that's how we've marketed ourselves. That's how we've behaved. That's how we are.

kara swisher

All right, now you say you're neutral, but your members are primarily conservative at this moment. And you do want to make it bigger — I've seen lots of interviews where you talked about it — but your co-founder is Rebekah Mercer, a major Republican Party donor, very early Trump backer. Are you actually neutral or are you seeing right now, as a right-wing publisher, all the people affiliated with you are more on the right? How do you change that? And tell me about the ownership structure.

john matze

---

Well, today everybody — a lot of people on the platform are on the right. And we have appealed to people on the right, because they are primarily the victims of online censorship right now, the way I see it.

kara swisher

You know there's no actual evidence of that happening, just them saying it?

john matze

There's also no actual evidence of it not happening either.

kara swisher

Oh my God. Come on. That's Loch Ness Monster talk.

john matze

You can't say that, though. You can't say that.

kara swisher

I would like to see evidence of it. Just like I'd like to see more evidence of widespread election fraud, which, of course, you don't see in courts of — courts already are saying, too.

john matze

Well, yeah. So I don't want to get into the election thing. But let's put it this way, people feel that they are being censored online and they can't get their voice out.

kara swisher

Again, feelings are not facts. But OK. They're over there. They've moved over there. They're hurt by something that Twitter's done, although they certainly can't resist it on many levels.

john matze

---

In capitalism, we vote with our dollars. So — and online and on social media, our presence equates to our dollars, because being able to present ads allows people to sell products to them. And therefore by voting with their feed, they are essentially voting with in this example. And so their feelings do matter in this case, because whether or not it's factually happening, that's what they feel. And the way I see it, is today it is a conservative issue. A lot of conservatives feel that they are censored, and they're not living up to their free speech values. Tomorrow, it may be the left. Today, it may be a foreign country, which there has been other foreign countries that have had these issues too. We saw a large influx from Saudi Arabia. We've seen a large influx in Brazil. So there are other countries where people feel that they are being censored online too.

kara swisher

OK. So that's what you're appealing to? So your ownership, Rebekah Mercer — who else is ownership? Is it Dan Bongino?

john matze

So primarily, it's me and our co-founders, which would be Jared and Rebekah. And then you have Dan Bongino is also an investor. And you also have Jeffrey Wernick in his group, who've publicly come out. And that's basically the extent of everybody involved in the company.

kara swisher

Is she the principal funder in this case, financial funder?

john matze

At this point, no. We have more people involved in the financing of the company. And now we have actually ad revenue doing a lot of our — covering a lot of our monthly overhead.

kara swisher

So who are your advertisers right now then?

---

john matze

Anybody can create an ad as long as they have a badge on the platform. So the badge system is where they prove their identity to us. Once they do that, they can then advertise.

kara swisher

What are the most of the ads? What do they focus on?

john matze

Most of it's national brands. So it's anything that can be sold anywhere in the U.S. for the most part.

kara swisher

Who's your biggest advertiser?

john matze

Might be hard to say. We've had a lot of political ads.

kara swisher

Yeah, I bet.

john matze

It's been a large, probably the largest sector.

kara swisher

But more right or left?

john matze

Republican leaning.

kara swisher

---

Republican. How do you then assess President Trump's behavior online on social media, especially Twitter?

john matze

I think actually they should not flag his stuff. They shouldn't censor him. They shouldn't let him — force them to hold back.

kara swisher

Well, they didn't for a very long time, for most of his —

john matze

No, they didn't for a while, but he's also ramped up more recently too. But if you don't get involved, if you don't censor, if you don't — you just let him do what he wants, then the public can judge for themselves. Don't weigh in. Just sit there and say, hey, that's what he said. What do you guys think?

kara swisher

What about him saying things right now that seem to be inciting violence?

john matze

OK, well, let's break it down this way. Do you feel that Twitter has a responsibility to get involved?

kara swisher

Right at this moment where there is violence happening and he seems to be encouraging it? Yes, I do think there is some role. But I would say, when he lies incessantly, flagging it is not — it's not censoring. It's linking to better information. And that's their judgment, because it's their company.

john matze

Yeah, but isn't that kind of the role of a journalist and a publication?

kara swisher



---

It's their company. The New York Times doesn't print every crazy email we get, do we? We print the ones we think are valuable.

john matze

But they've billed themselves as a free place for people to contribute —

kara swisher

Not anymore.

john matze

— their own content.

kara swisher

No.

john matze

They did historically, but maybe not anymore.

kara swisher

Historically. You're absolutely right.

john matze

But then don't you view Twitter, then, in that case, as a competitor of —

kara swisher

Yes, I think they're a media company. I've always thought that. I think Facebook is too. I think they like to have it both ways. On ParlerTakes right now, which is the one on Twitter that talks about Parler, things that are on Parler, a video of MAGA-ers chanting hang Mike Pence, one user Joel Fischer is saying, looks like Republicans have full control of the House and the Senate. Now there's a collection of a fund to bail out a member of the Proud Boys who's been arrested. Is this normal day?

---

john matze

No, that's pretty extreme. I think by any metric that's pretty extreme.

kara swisher

Right. Hang Mike Pence should stay there?

john matze

I don't know. They'd have to report it.

kara swisher

What do you think? If you were the jury?

john matze

I would take it down. If I was a jury member, I'd vote against it. But that's my opinion. So you've got to get four out of five people to share my view. I think they probably would. But it's pretty clear there's a clear and imminent threat of danger, considering they're literally raiding buildings and then —

kara swisher

Talking about hanging.

john matze

Spreading a message to hurt somebody.

kara swisher

OK. You said you didn't vote in the last election. Will you vote in the next one?

john matze

Probably not.

kara swisher

Because?

---

john matze

I don't know. I kind of subscribe to the theory that, I guess — I don't know how to word this. Let's see.

I don't know that I really am interested in participating too much in it. One is I'd like to remain neutral, but also I don't really have a whole lot of confidence in the system. That's really what it comes down to.

kara swisher

Because you don't believe in the system?

john matze

Yeah.

kara swisher

So how do you feel today about democracy?

john matze

Well, it's not the idea of democracy. It's — because the idea of democracy is a great idea.

kara swisher

How do you feel about our democracy today?

john matze

I think that we're destined to go towards more of a socialist progressive state. I think it's just inevitable, and whether you vote or not, it's heading that way. And I don't think there's much anybody can do about it.

kara swisher

And not an authoritarian, which is another direction?

john matze

---

It could be authoritarian. I'm not sure if it will or will not be. It just depends on who comes into power and how strong-willed they are.

kara swisher

All right. Yes, well, we'll see how that turns out. This great experiment continues, the United States of America. It is sad when you get really — today, I don't know if you've noticed on Twitter or not, maybe on Parler — a lot of foreign leaders just say — it's just go look on Twitter.

john matze

Oh, they're probably laughing.

kara swisher

Yes, well, laughing is not what I would say they're doing.

john matze

Well, mocking.

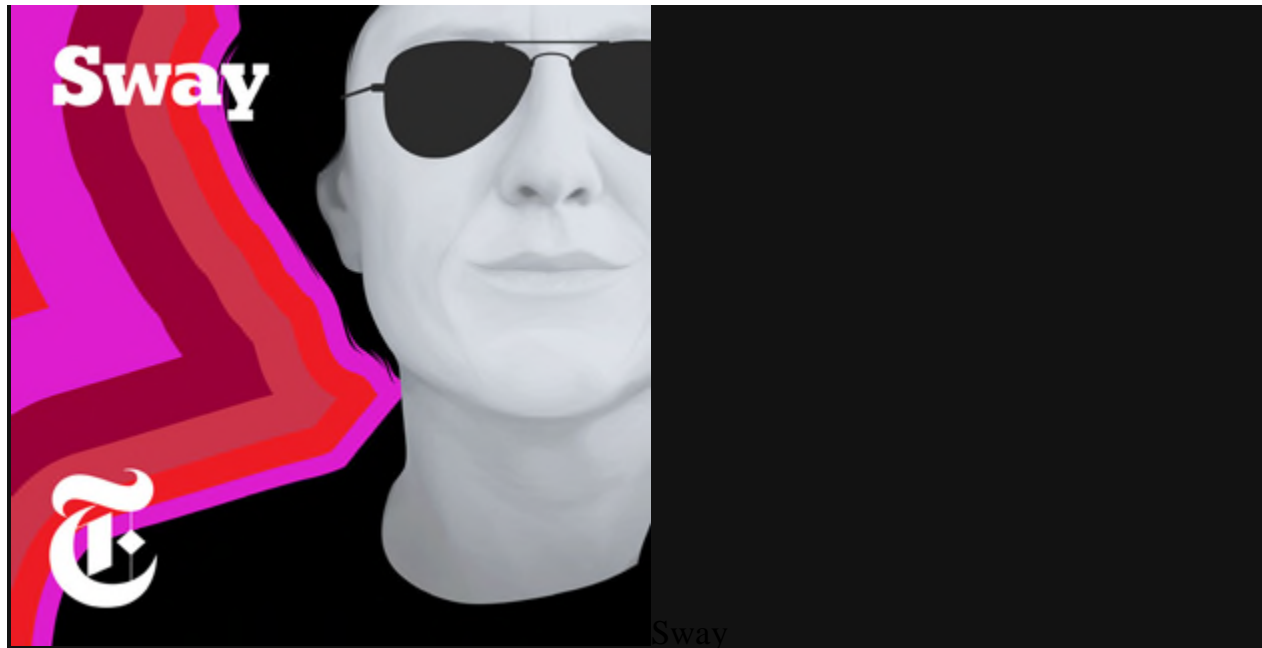
kara swisher

I think disappointment. I think disappointment. I would say I think, no. It's not mocking. It's oh my God. You were the last hope kind of thing. We thought you were better. I don't know. We'll see. Anyway, I think it's quite genuine what they're saying, and I don't think they're happy at all. I don't think many people are today. It's not a good day for America.

Sway is a production of New York Times opinion. It's produced by Nayeema Raza, Heba Elorbany, Matt Kwong, and Vishakha Darbha. Edited by Paula Szuchman with original music by Isaac Jones, mixing by Erik Gomez, and fact-checking by Kate Sinclair and Michelle Harris. Special thanks to Renan Borelli, Liriel Higa, and Kathy Tu.

If you're in a podcast app already, you know how to subscribe to a podcast. So subscribe to this one. If you're listening on The Times website and want to get

each new episode of Sway, download a podcast app like Stitcher or Google Podcasts, then search for Sway and hit subscribe. We release every Monday and Thursday. Thanks for listening.



Jan. 7, 2021

## **If You Were on Parler, You Saw the Mob Coming**

**It is a go-to social media site for the right, with users calling to “burn D.C. to the ground.” The C.E.O., John Matze, says it’s not his job to police speech.**

Hosted by Kara Swisher

**Transcript**

Back to Sway

-0:00

---

**TRANSCRIPT**

---